

MINUTES
California Biodiversity Council
Regional Meeting
March 19, 1998
San Francisco, California

Members present

Doug Wheeler, Resources Agency
Jim Branham, Resources Agency
Richard Wilson, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Brian Hunter, Department of Fish and Game
Ken Jones, Department of Parks and Recreation
Nita Vail, Department of Food and Agriculture
Robert Hight, State Lands Commission
Larry Goldzband, Department of Conservation
Bill Ahern, California Coastal Conservancy
Gary Winters, California Department of Transportation
Alex Glazer, University of California
Bob Haussler, California Energy Commission
Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Department of Water Resources
Mietek Kolipinski, National Park Service
Diane Holcomb, National Resources Conservation Service
Wayne White, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ed Hastey, Bureau of Land Management
Frank Michny, Bureau of Reclamation
Alexis Strauss, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
James Bybee, National Marine Fisheries Service
Colonel Eric Christenson, U.S. Marine Corps
Doug Balmain, San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of County Supervisors
Bud Laurent, South Central Coast Regional Association of County Supervisors
Bill Rooe, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Jerry Harmon, San Diego Association of Governments
G. Lynn Sprague, USDA Forest Service
William Vance, California Environmental Protection Agency

Call to order

Chairman Douglas P. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 8:40 am.

Approval of Minutes for November 19, 1997 meeting

Minutes were approved as written.

Report of the Executive Committee - Carl Rountree, Chair

The 1998/99 Work plan, "Strengthening Ties with Local Government to Conserve Biological Diversity and Enhance Economic Sustainability," focuses on three goals:

1) Communication and outreach - four council meetings a year and regional manager forums; 2) Education - continuation of the Biodiversity News and updating of

educational materials; and 3) Natural Resource Science and Planning Information - better interagency communication and collaboration coordinated through the Science Coordinating Committee.

Council Announcements

Chris Crystal, editor of the Biodiversity Newsletter, has taken a position with the Nevada Department of Tourism in Carson City.

Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Awards - each year these awards are presented to organizations, individuals, and programs that have made outstanding achievements in balancing environmental protection and conservation with sustainable economic development. Applications are due May 15.

The Biodiversity Conservation Award filing date has been extended to June 1. This award was created in memory of Harley Greiman. Additional nominations are encouraged.

On March 16th, CALFED released a draft EIS/EIR outlining three alternatives. The draft will undergo a 75-day review period. The preferred alternative will be selected in late summer after a round of statewide public hearings and workshops.

Diane Holcomb of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) discussed the programs under the Farm Bill (WHIP, EQIP, WRP). Additionally, an MOU is still in the works which uses the NRCS Technical Guide and best management Practices. NRCS as well as other USDA agencies will be moving to a new building in Davis in November.

Lynn Sprague of the USDA Forest Service discussed their Sierra Conservation Framework. USDA Forest Service plans to use a multi-ownership, multi-stakeholder approach in developing the framework.

Alexis Strauss, USEPA, announced the President's Clean Water Action Plan. The Plan outlines over 100 action items for restoring and protecting America's waters. There is \$568 million outlined in new resources for FY '99 and an estimated \$2.3 billion over the next 5 years.

Ken Jones of the Department of Parks and Recreation discussed a Science Panel Report on Coal Canyon Linkage in Orange County. This area has been identified as a priority wildlife corridor in the Santa Ana/Chino Hills area.

Bud Laurent described the work of the Morro Estuary Greenbelt Alliance, a local group out of Los Osos. Colonel Christensen updated the group on recent activities under the Department of Defense.

Report on March 18 Local Forum - Will Travis, BCDC

The morning panel included Jim Sayer, Greenbelt Alliance, regarding "Beyond Sprawl." Beyond Sprawl documents the high cost of continuing sprawl development. Josh Collins from the San Francisco Estuary Institute discussed the Wetlands Goals Project and why we need to give deference to nature in our planning for the future of the Bay region.

Nancy Schaefer, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, explained how wetlands have value that can be measured in dollars as well as in improved environmental quality. She described the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture and how the private sector has joined in the campaign to protect wetlands. Rich Morrison, Bank of America, emphasized ways the business community is working to protect the environment. He discussed the activities of the California Environmental Dialogue and Sierra Business Council. To increase business participation in biodiversity issues, Mr. Morrison recommended articulating an integrated vision, clearly describing the benefits (direct and indirect) of involvement, and maintaining a strong organizing power to ensure its an organized effort.

Local Forum conclusions: the Bay Area recognizes that (1) wasting natural resources is a drain on economic prosperity and (2) protecting natural heritage is a wise investment that stretches public funding, saves money for the private sector and helps attract and keep the type of workers needed to make a knowledge-based economy grow. Additionally, the Bay Area's enduring leadership in environmental protection is making a positive contribution to the region's economic growth. The Bay Area's regional economy is at the top of the nation's charts because the Bay Area is on the cutting edge of the emerging knowledge-based economy of the United States. The region needs a clear vision for inspiration and guidance. This vision needs to reflect the interests of all elements of our society. Conclusion: the best way to increase the biodiversity of the Bay region is to gain a better understanding of natural systems, then get out of nature's way.

Report on Alameda-Contra Costa Biodiversity Group - Carl Wilcox, Department of Fish and Game

The Alameda-Contra Costa Biodiversity Group is working on a County study to improve the informational base for planning decisions relating to biological diversity in eastern Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The best available technical information will be compiled, analyzed and presented in a report. A multi-stakeholders Advisory Committee oversees the work.

Sustaining the Environmental and Economic Health of the San Francisco Bay

Introduction to the San Francisco Bay - Moderator: Gary Binger, Association of Bay Area Governments

Fred Nichols, U.S. Geological Survey, provided a slide show on the environmental setting of the Bay Area including some of the history on how the area developed.

Bay Area Alliance on Sustainable Development- Dick Clarke, CEO Retired, PG&E, and Carl Anthony, President, Earth Island Institute

The Bay Area Alliance on Sustainable Development was convened in March of 1997. The Alliance is a multi-stakeholder coalition formed to implement an action plan that will lead to a more sustainable Bay Area. An outgrowth of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development is working to develop principles and recommendations for the Bay-Delta region to help create sustainable communities.

The Alliance's vision statement is to support "... a Bay Area where the natural environment is vibrant, healthy and safe, where the economy is robust and globally competitive, and where all citizens have equitable opportunities to share in the benefits of a quality environment and a prosperous economy."

The Alliance integrates perspectives of members representing Bay Area business, environmental, economic, government and social equity sectors. Over the next two years the Alliance will develop a Regional Compact for Sustainability to address the priority sustainability issues in the Bay Area.

Bay Area Case Studies Panel

Vicki Moore of the Greenbelt Alliance discussed their Urban Growth Boundary Risk Map and Conservation Program. The Greenbelt Alliance is an advocacy group that, among other things, is actively working to create long-term urban growth boundaries, rural planning standards, and support downtown revitalization efforts. One effective tool has been the creation of a Bay Area risk map, which depicts the urban possibilities for the Bay Area. They are currently finishing the Santa Clara County Risk map and will combine this with eight other Bay Area Counties for distribution late this summer.

Terri Thomas, Resource Management, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) discussed the GGNRA Site Stewardship Habitat Restoration Partnerships. She described three community-based natural resource programs: 1) the Raptor Observatory Program, 2) Earthwatch Program and, 3) an Education/Restoration Program. These programs have grown rapidly and effectively utilize a large network of volunteers.

Rosemary Cameron, Assistant Director for Public Affairs, discussed the East Bay Regional Park District's Master Plan Policy on Cultural Diversity. The District serves the 2.3 million residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties and operates 86,000 acres of park and open space and over 1,000 miles of trails. This policy was developed in an effort for the District to expand its level of service to the increasingly diverse East Bay community. In this capacity, the District's focus is on development of a cultural diversity policy, establishment of an outdoor recreation program, revision of its printed communications strategy, expansion of community outreach efforts, and initiation of a customer research program.

Kathy Kramer, Executive Director, Aquatic Outreach Institute, presented information regarding building awareness and constituents for urban creeks restoration and stewardship. The Institute is a non-profit organization located in Richmond with a staff of seven and an annual budget of nearly \$400,000. The Institute manages nine programs on creeks, wetlands and the San Francisco Bay. These programs are designed to involve educators and the general public in local natural resource protection.

Ms. Kramer described methods used in the successful Kids in Creeks and San Leandro and Sausal Creek Watershed Awareness Programs that involve children and adults in creek protection and restoration activities. She provided a top ten list of factors to consider when developing a public involvement program, and the slide show she presented provided examples of activities the Institute's staff have found to be successful in obtaining and holding public interest and involvement. These activities included watershed festivals; ivy removal; watershed-based art, photo, essay and science fair contests for schoolchildren; and the creation of signs stating "You are now in the Sausal Creek Watershed." She ended her presentation with before-and after slides of the restoration project the Friends of Sausal Creek have conducted in Oakland.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.